

Dear President Knapp,

Having retired from the County Fire and Rescue Service almost ten years ago as a Deputy Fire Chief, I have kept aware of issues involving the fire and rescue service.

I believe that the one true measure of a fire and EMS department's effectiveness in delivering emergency service to the community is the amount of time it takes from when they call 911 to the arrival of help. This response time is critical in effectively treating a medical emergency or beginning the attack on a hostile fire. Both station location and staffing levels contribute to the overall response time. Bill 25-08 will insure now and for the future that response times will decline as service improves.

Over ten years ago, I and others attempted to convince fire and government leadership that failing to charge for EMS service was, in fact, leaving money on the table. The timing for this was not right and the idea didn't go very far. At the time there was no County Fire Chief and the service was much more divided than today.

The opponents used the same arguments then as they will now about people being hesitant to call for fear of being charged for the service. I had staff check with jurisdictions that charge for this service and they found no reduction in call load.

It is certainly an idea whose time has come and I hope you can support it.

LeRoy Oettinger  
Montgomery County Resident